



Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer testimony on S.B. No. 132, the expansion of fireworks in Connecticut

My name is Eric Turner, Governmental Affairs Director for American Promotional Events in Florence, Alabama. Our company is the largest fireworks/sparkler company in the United States; and we sell under the brand name, TNT Fireworks. In 2020, our company celebrated 100 years in the fireworks business. We sell in every state in the United States, with the exception of Massachusetts, to chain retailers and Mom & Pops, as well as not-for-profits who sell from parking-lot tents. We service over 40,000 retailers and several thousand temporary tents and stands across the country.

We worked with our long-time Connecticut lobbyist, Alan Deckman, now over 20 years ago in 2000, to encourage the Connecticut legislature to allow the sale of handheld and ground-based sparklers. We have been very pleased with sales in Connecticut and the safety record of use by Connecticut citizens, as they celebrate the 4th of July. Some of our Connecticut Retailers include WalMart, Sam's Club, Costco, BJ's, Safeway, Albertson's, Dollar General, Wakefern, Price Chopper, Stew Leonard's, Walgreen's & Lowe's.

We appreciate the intent of the sponsors of this legislation to expand to bigger fireworks.

However, we have several problems with the way the bill is drafted and would oppose the bill without significant changes. We have seen proposed bills like this in a number of states.

- Current statute allows the sale of handheld and ground-based sparklers or fountains. These items are sold throughout Connecticut by big box stores, supermarkets, drug stores, convenient stores and temporary tents.
- One major problem we have, is expansion limits sales of these bigger fireworks to stand-alone fireworks stores, at the expense of Connecticut retailers and not-for-profits
- This means Connecticut retailers and not for profits will sell a lot less fireworks for the 4th of July, which means less profit for the retailer, and limited availability for the consumer
- We typically respond to proposed legislation to expand to bigger fireworks, with the following:
"We are okay with expansion if that is the will of the legislature, as long as it can be sold in all retail venues where fireworks are currently being sold."

Without legislation allowing the sale in all venues, we are OPPOSED to expansion in the state of Connecticut.

Thanks again for allowing me to testify.

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